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b) a variant of any one of the sequences in (a), wherein the amino acid sequence of said variant has at least 80% identity to at least one of the sequences in (a); and

c) a fragment of one of the sequences of (a) wherein the fragment comprises at least 6 contiguous amino acids.

63. The polypeptide of claim 62, wherein the amino acid sequence of the variant of (b) has at least 90% identity to at least one of the sequences in (a).

64. The polypeptide of claim 62, wherein the amino acid sequence of the variant of (b) has at least 95% identity to at least one of the sequences in (a).

65. The polypeptide of claim 62, wherein the amino acid sequence of the variant comprises a conservative amino acid substitution.

66. An isolated polypeptide, wherein said polypeptide comprises the amino acid sequences of a naturally occurring allelic variant of an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:36, SEQ ID NO:38, SEQ ID NO:40, and SEQ ID NO:41,

67. The polypeptide of claim 62, wherein the polypeptide, or fragment thereof, has SAg activity.

68. The polypeptide of claim 62, wherein the polypeptide, or fragment thereof, is encoded by a human endogenous retrovirus.

69. The polypeptide of claim 62, wherein the polypeptide, or fragment thereof, is encoded by the *env* gene.

70. An antibody that binds immunospecifically to the polypeptide of claim 62.